

# When the Ocean Was Ours

*by* Meghan K. Barnes

The Ocean used to be ours.

When the stars were still fire and they were the only light burning though the dim, hazy nights, the ocean was ours. Before the smog, and the lights that were carried by the men who rose from the sea, the ocean was ours.

We didn't plan for the humans to begin to walk, or communicate in the way that they did. We did not plan for them to evolve faster than us, to develop a fifth finger that makes them more capable than us— we didn't plan for them to start to hunt us.

And now that the stars are dimmed by the lights, and the fish are dwindling, we watch as the ocean is no longer ours. It is taken over by people in uniforms testing sounds underwater. It is taken over by humans who throw their nets into the sea to capture fish. It is taken over by people who follow us for days, weeks, months, years— to hunt us. To kill us.

The Ocean used to be ours, but now it is yours.

The ocean, the stars, the light, the dark. It used to be ours.

